643 Sometimes the reigning sovereign can openly designate [97] even one of his youngest sons as heir. This happens when the soothsayers recognize him as being a "magic" king, with the mission of overcoming, for example, an epidemic (Umwami w'imitsindo). Thus Rwabugiri conferred power on his eldest son Rutalindwa, who took the name of Mibambwe, only for the duration of Musinga's minority.

Usually the name of the king's successor is secretly indicated by the king to the abiru, who then proclaim the one chosen.

669 643 As the law of primogeniture does not exist, palace revolutions frequently occur on the death of kings. There are disputes between royal wives who have male children, especially when the wives belong to powerful families, in order to raise themselves and their sons to supreme power and to be able to bestow on members of their family high positions, land, and herds. It was this kind of revolution that, soon after the death of Rwabugiri, overthrew Mibamwe and gave Ruanda to Musinga and his mother Kanjogera.

10. Accession of the King

643 Two days after the death of the Mwami, his successor is proclaimed king by the guardians of the customs. After two months of mourning, all the great and small chiefs and their abagaragu go to Nyanza. The Inyambo are also brought there. For two days the most unbridled joy is given free rein amidst drinking, dancing, and games. The new king shows himself to the people in formal garments, his forehead bound with a crown composed of strings of white beads (ikamba or igisingo) falling over his face, and he receives from his subjects, as a gift of accession, some indabukirano. Then the people go back to their homes and the new reign begins.

643 644 If the son of the deceased is too young to actually reign [98], the mother and usually the maternal uncles of the young prince act as regents (1). Similarly the Umugabekazi participates in the

1. We should point out however that Ruganzu Bwimba, before setting out on an expedition against the people of

661 wisdom consists in not letting oneself be governed too much by
565 caprice and not becoming relatively the worst tyrant.

Even now when there is peace in the land, petty wars among
669 Musinga's bagaragu and brawls among the bagaragu of the bagaragu
642 of the king are by no means rare, but they occur chiefly in the border regions where the power of the king is not so strongly felt. At the time of my visit, for example, Lukara was fighting with Luhanga in Mulera. In cases like this it often happens that the king is unable to find a man who would not be too afraid to manage and tax the warlike farmers if they were assigned to him. In this way the Bahutu gain their independence and can be subjugated anew only by a punitive expedition.

[264] Under these circumstances, petty internal strife is a natural function of the state and does not result merely in brutality and devastation. In this way, even though it is uneconomical, poor administrators are weeded out, and the power of the strong is curtailed. This principle may at first glance seem paradoxical, but it corresponds very well to the facts. When it comes to the formation of a state under unlimited rule which on principle admits no protest, limitations must arise spontaneously if large masses of people are to live together.

661 The situation changes, however, the moment there is pacifi-
642 cation and the country is opened up and organized by Europeans.
178 The old, natural, albeit uneconomical forms which, after all,
648 regulated conditions are now done away with by force of arms and the rulers, weakened by emigration, overcome. On the other hand, the opening up of export trade creates countless possibilities for exploiting subjects in a hitherto unknown way. The situation of the natives is getting worse, for the new judicial norms, despite their humane phraseology, are less protection to them than the old regulations upon which the organization of the state was built. In Kissaka one can see many natives from Ussuwi who have taken refuge there from the blessings of humane European civilization. Under these new conditions, the only weapon in the hands of the subjects is economic injury to the chief, and this can be achieved by the emigration of the labor force.

The situation of the natives is worst of all where Europeans have put a stop to freedom of movement in order to make police

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refrain from decisions which could have impaired the economic production of the country, such as requiring tributes which were too heavy, or which could have lowered the level of personal security to such an extent that people would have preferred to flee abroad.[33] Moreover, profound legislative modifications would have roused the resistance of the *biru*. Nevertheless, his powers were still extremely great. A fact which reinforced and consolidated them was the tradition of the long past of the dynasty. The present mwami, Mutara III Rudahigwa is regarded as the fortieth king of Ruanda. Even if the first twenty names are considered as legendary, three or four centuries is a considerable past for a dynasty. The Abanyiginya clan has indeed been able to keep the kingship of Ruanda as long as kings are remembered.

The mwami was not only of divine origin but he was Ruanda personified. This mystical identification with the country resulted in numerous avoidances and a very careful behaviour was expected from the mwami. What happened to him would reverberate, as it were, over the country. He should not bend his knees, for instance, lest Ruanda's territory would shrink.

Royal succession was not completely fixed by custom. The heir was chosen by the king from among his sons. He was generally one of the youngest because the strength of Ruanda was magically connected with the king's strength. The name of the chosen one was kept secret. Even the future mwami did not know it. It was revealed only after the king's death by the three most important biru whom the mwami had entrusted with his decision. The other sons and their mothers generally did not agree willingly to the choice and there was often a period of unrest, even of civil war, before the new mwami became an effective ruler.[34]

A new name was given to the new king, one of the five royal names which were chosen according to the same sequence: Cyilima, Kigeli, Nibambwe, Yuhi, Mutara. The kings named Cyilima, Yuhi, and Mutara were called 'peaceful bami'. They were not allowed to cross the Nyabarongo, a river which runs in the centre of the country, not far from Nyanza, the capital, and this symbolized the fact that they should not send their armies abroad. This rule very wisely allowed the country to recuperate and to assimilate new territories conquered during a preceding warlike reign.

[33] Maquet, 1953. [34] See Gluckman, 1954, p. 8.

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Ruanda rulers were able to check successfully these tendencies
towards the fragmentation of the political unity of their country, first, by the ritual character of the royal power.

To revolt against the king, identified with Ruanda and supported by Imana, was a sacrilege and a profanation. It is not claimed that such a theory was sufficient to secure the kings with effective power indefinitely. Elsewhere similar ideologies of absolute and divine power of the monarchs have not prevented some of them from being stripped of their real authority, whereas their divine prerogatives were still respected. The ritual sanction does not seem to have had a primary importance in the maintenance of submission to the Ruanda kingship. In 1896 or 1897, a young mwami, Mibambwe IV Rutalindwa, was assailed and eventually lost his life in a revolt instigated by the brother of the queen-mother. That queen-mother was not the mother of the mwami but another wife of his father. Her clan, the Abega, wanted a son of hers as mwami.[8] This shows that when the king lost effective control of power, ritual sanctions were not an effective safeguard for his prerogatives, or even for his life. This is why it has not been thought necessary to expand on the ritual aspect of the Ruanda kingship. But it certainly was a factor which contributed to the obedience of the Ruanda nobles.

Another check was that the king kept at his disposal the coercive force of the armies. Even if the rebel had the support of one or two armies, the king had all the others.

But the main factor which I think prevented local authorities from asserting their independence from the central government, was the plural character of the political and feudal organization. In connexion with the maintenance of the effective power of the central government, this plurality of structure was a very effective means of maintaining misunderstanding, hostility, and jealousy among the subordinate chiefs. It is certain that the *shebuja* of our example in the preceding section, would have been only too glad to denounce to the mwami the army-chief if the latter was indulging in suspicious manœuvres. The co-existence of chiefs of almost the same rank who were constantly induced by their subjects to take sides in disputes was sufficient to create mistrust among themselves. Moreover, conflicts were numerous, particularly when two chiefs had the same territorial power (as in the case of the cattle- and land-chiefs). To settle conflicts they had to resort to the

[8] Pagès, 1933, pp. 195-206.